

# THE BAPTIST Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

## Love, patience yield salvation results

AMBOANJOBE, Madagascar (BP) — When Cyclone Geraldo roared out of the Indian Ocean and ravaged the eastern coast of Madagascar in 1993, thousands of islanders were left homeless and destitute.

Already some of the poorest people in the world with an average monthly income of less than \$25, many were reduced to begging or driven to prostitution.

Foreign Mission Board missionaries on Madagascar, however, envisioned something better — a new start for people who had lost what little they had.

In the aftermath of Geraldo, about 180 homeless families created the new village of Amboanjobe (ahm-bahn-zoo-BAY), said Ben Williams, who serves on Madagascar through the board's International Service Corps program. The missionaries decided

to share God's love with the families by helping them become self-sufficient — and then waiting for them to respond to the caring witness.

Using Southern Baptist hunger and relief funds, each family was given a \$10 credit toward the purchase of small animals.

Many chose chickens, ducks or turkeys, while some families pooled their credits to buy a sheep or a pig.

A small herd of dairy cows provides milk for children whose diets usually consist only of rice and beans. A new biogas plant uses manure from the cows to produce gas to help villagers cook meals.

"We're really pleased at how people have responded to this opportunity," said Williams, an Alabama native who has served on Madagascar since September 1995.

"There is a desire in each of us to provide for our families. We try to tap into that desire," he said.

The witness to God's love convinced a few of the 130 families participating in the program to make decisions for Christ, Williams said.

That small congregation in turn caught a vision of what God wanted to do in Madagascar.

Members of the new church began visiting, going door to door until they had shared the gospel with every family in the village. About 40 people made decisions for Christ in one week.

"These are all adults," Williams said. "These new Christians have begun to evangelize; and they have seen results. Over 50 people have just accepted Christ. It's very exciting."

Now the congregation is turning its attention to other villages in the valley, two of which are controlled by witch doctors.

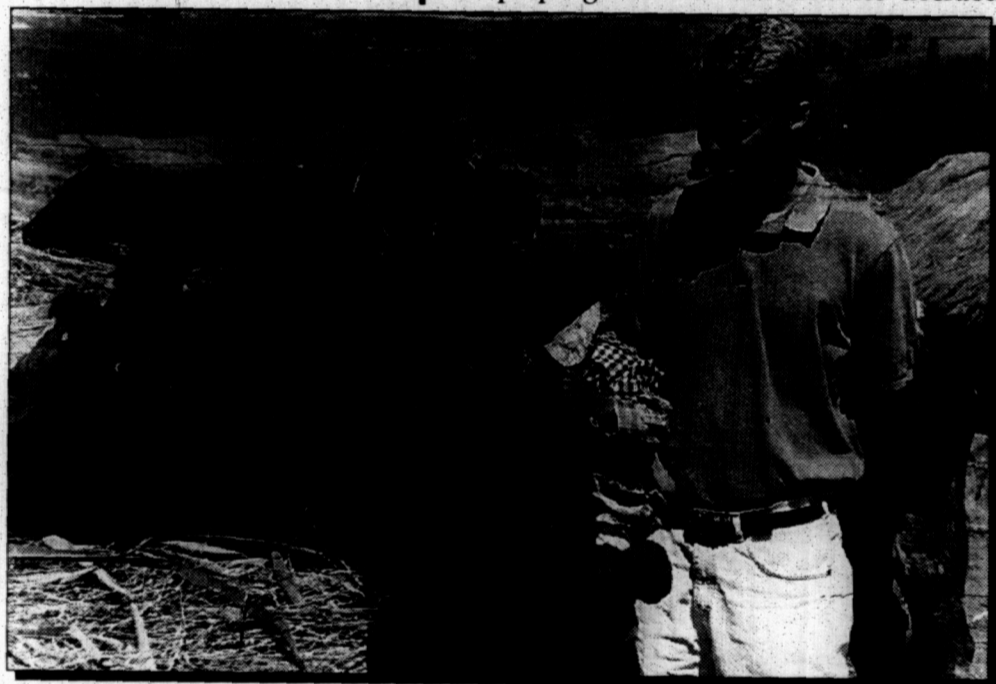
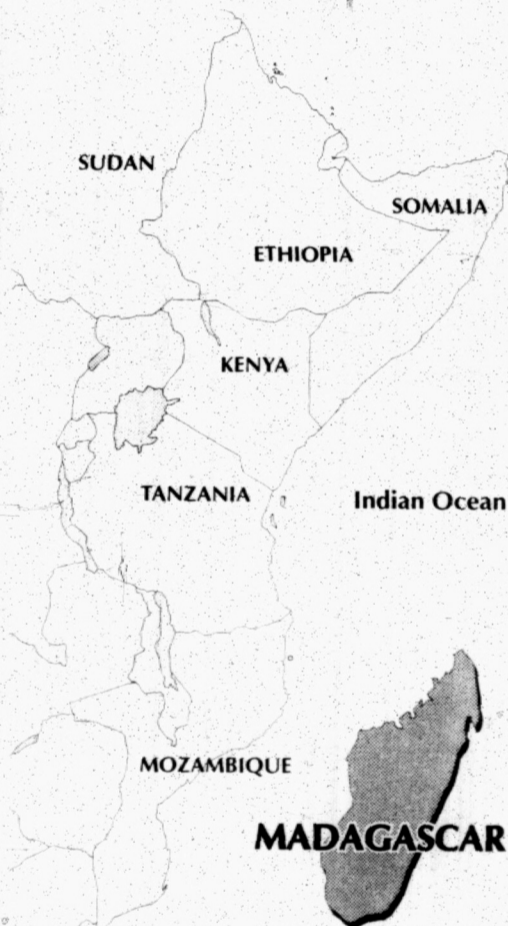
The church at Amboanjobe is reaching people for Christ who otherwise might never have heard the gospel — because Southern Baptists cared enough to minister to physical needs, Williams said.

"We've been able to plant a church in a country that has few Baptist churches and

where few people have a true understanding of the gospel," he said. "We'd like to say fire came down from heaven and all these people made decisions."

"But it takes time and patience to develop churches like this. When people haven't been around Christians, they don't know what Christians are, so it takes work. The people have to see an example lived out on a daily basis."

"When they do see, and when they learn you really believe what you're saying, that's when they make a decision."



**A Fresh Start** — When a cyclone left residents of a Madagascar village homeless and destitute, Southern Baptist missionaries responded with a human needs ministry aimed at helping the people become self-sufficient. About 40 villagers made professions of faith in Christ as a result of the ministry and now have turned their attention to reaching nearby villages. Southern Baptist missionary Ben Williams (right) chats with a village resident. (BP photo by Tim Cummins)

### WHAT'S IN THE RECORD

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### Henry to serve on committee

Jim Henry, immediate past president of the Southern Baptist Convention and pastor of First Church, Orlando, is one of 20 religious leaders and scholars named to a special U.S. State Department advisory committee on religious liberty abroad. The committee "will call attention to the problems of religious persecution abroad" and is "expected to provide advice on how to bring about reconciliation in those areas where religious enmity is a threat to peace," according to a White House statement.

"It is my fervent prayer that the work of the committee will visibly raise the attention of our government and public consciousness to the increasing persecution of Christians and other religious minorities in many places in the world," Henry said. "We cannot be silent and indifferent in the face of mounting losses of religious freedom."

The panel includes religious leaders from Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox Christian traditions, as well as those from Jewish, Muslim, Mormon, and Bahá'í faiths, and scholars from Harvard, Emory and Indiana Universities.

### Looking back

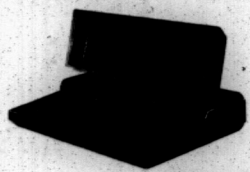
#### 10 years ago

A 32-year-old Liberian man admits to murdering Southern Baptist missionary Libby Tarlton Senter, 47, and her 10-year-old daughter Rachel after Robert Senter, husband and father of the victims, offers the man forgiveness.

President-elect Jimmy Carter asks Owen Cooper, a retired Yazoo City industrialist and former president of the Mississippi Baptist Convention, to serve on the committee that will advise the president-elect on political appointments.

West Jackson Church organizes Wednesday night, Nov. 12, with D. A. McCall, executive secretary of the state convention, speaking. J. L. Sullivan is called as pastor. A total of 26 charter names are on the church roll, with more to be added next Sunday.

## EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



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Perkins Jr.**  
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# The legacy of the Heavenly Book Visitor

Charlotte Diggs Moon was born into the rarified Virginia aristocracy at her family's Albermarle County estate on Dec. 17, 1840.

She died a pauper's death 72 years later, thousands of miles from home and a lifetime away from her privileged early life.

Those are the cold, textbook facts. We all have a beginning and an end on this earth, but it's what we do in between that counts for eternity.

"Lottie," as she came to be called, understood that.

Although she was raised with cultural and educational advantages far above the standards of the day, Lottie Moon was a disaffected student and scornful of religion.

A bright young woman given to mischief and pranks, it appeared she was headed for a life of casual dissipation.

All that changed in 1858, however, when God moved in her life and she accepted Christ as Lord and Savior while attending First Church, Charlottesville, Va.

God moved again in her life in 1873, when she requested and against all odds received her missionary appointment from the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board (FMB) — one of the first single women chosen for Southern Baptist missionary service.

Lottie set sail for China in September of that year and by December had settled in the northern town of Tengchow, where she lived for the next 40 years.

She devoted herself to evangelistic work among the women and children of the surrounding area, telling all who would listen about the "true God," giving away books, and teaching those who couldn't read the books.

Lottie was rejected many times and earned the nickname of "Devil Old Woman," but her persistence never faded.

She wrote to her friends in the United States, "I wish I had a thousand lives that I might give them to the women of China!"

Lottie's love for the Bible and for the Chinese people became legendary in the villages around Tengchow, and opposition to her work eventually faded.

Then one day as she moved among the people with Bible in hand, she heard someone refer to her as "The Heavenly Book Visitor." The name stuck with the villagers.

In Lottie's day, China suffered almost constant internal political and military turmoil, with outside powers also attempting to exert their influence.

Still, Lottie fervently continued her work. Civil strife at one point prompted the American consul to gather U.S. citizens to the city of Chefoo for protection, but Lottie refused to leave her beloved people in Tengchow.

The Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05, fought over control of the Chinese province of Manchuria and other parts of China, ignited a famine that soon spread through the countryside and foreshadowed fateful events to come in Lottie's life.

Lottie begged the FMB for money to buy food for the starving Chinese, but the board was in debt and had no money to send.

Desperate to help the people around whom God had called her to build her life and ministry, Lottie withdrew her personal savings and used it to feed the hungry.

When that money ran out, she used virtually all her meager salary to buy food for others — often failing to retain enough for herself.

She collapsed five days before her seventy-second birthday, her health broken and her frail, 4'11" frame nearly decimated. Years of personal sacrifice had taken its toll.

Lottie died of starvation on Christmas Eve 1912, in the harbor of Kobe, Japan, on a ship that was taking her to America. Her body was cremated according to Japanese

"I DON'T WANNA PLAY  
JACK 'N JILL — LET'S PLAY  
LOTTIE MOON AND PUT  
THAT BUCKET TO GOOD USE!"



law and the ashes were returned to Virginia.

There were no parades or posthumous award ceremonies for Lottie. No White House dinner was ever held in her honor.

The world took little note of her life and death, but she changed China and Southern Baptists forever.

Many sad events have transpired in Lottie's China since she came home, but God will yet prevail in that nation of soft-spoken, humble people.

A marble gravestone in a small Virginia cemetery carries Lottie's name, as does the greatest foreign missions offering in Christendom.

On that gravestone is this simple phrase: "Faithful unto death."

God permit that those words, bought at so great a price by the Heavenly Book Visitor, should also mark our own Christian service.

## A PASTOR'S PERSPECTIVE:



### Life's greatest adventure

By Carl M. White, Associate Editor

On the border between Tibet and Nepal run the Himalaya Mountains. In the midst of this range, there is one pike which rises 29,141 feet, or over five and a half miles above sea level.

This is Mt. Everest, the highest place on the face of the earth.

For decades mankind speculated about climbing its heights. Avalanches, high winds, and deep crevasses, combined with extreme steepness and thin air, made it seem near impossible. Many died trying.

Then, on March 10, 1953, a British expedition led by Sir John Hunt started up the southern side, considered by many as unclimbable.

Establishing a series of camps along the way, with a smaller group going forward from each camp, two men finally reached the summit on May 29, 1953, some two and a half months later.

The men were Sir Edmund Hillary of New Zealand, and a Nepalese Sherpa tribesman named Tensing Norgay.

Hillary went on to write a book about the climb. He titled it "High Adventure."

There are other high adventures in life. One is to be found on the Friday after Thanksgiving at shopping malls and stores

around the country. Last year's newspaper reported the scene.

At 5:50 a.m., the Wal Mart in Ridgeland had 150 or more people crowded around the front waiting for the doors to open at 6 a.m.

By 7 a.m., the layaway desk had a line of 50 people snaking its way through bedding and into women's apparel.

By 7:30 a.m., the manager reported over 500 shoppers in the store, a capacity crowd.

In Dover, Delaware, the Value City Department Store offered a \$10 coupon to the first 200 customers.

The doors opened at 7 a.m. They were out of coupons by 7:10 a.m. Two hundred coupons were gone in 10 minutes!

One year, I joined my wife on a shopping adventure on the Friday after Thanksgiving.

"We'll save so much money," she promised. We were at North Park Mall in Ridgeland when the first store opened its door.

I am glad to report I survived the experience. However, I'm certain I can never afford to save that much money again.

There are many high adventures to be had in this life, but I am convinced that none can match the high adventure of serving God.

Every day, phone calls, letters and wire stories come through the offices of "The Baptist Record."

Each one is a story about an adventure. Sometimes the adventure is as routine as a group of GAs collecting food for the hungry. Other times the stories are of the miraculous times when God has stepped into someone's life. Some sto-

ries are as mundane as the report of some board meeting.

Truth is, even the GA story is about the adventure of faith. Just ask that GA director. She'll tell you, every week with that group of girls is an adventure!

Out of groups just like that, God will call a missionary.

In that group of unruly sixth grade Sunday School boys, taught by a local insurance agent, will come a future leader of Mississippi Baptists.

Even the mundane board meeting is an adventure of faith. The people serving on the boards of our convention approve plans for new and renewed churches and changed lives.

For some people, each year brings the adventure of paying for Christmas shopping and still finding money to give generously to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. The result of that adventure is seen in souls the world over won for eternity.

When you think about it, faith is the only true high adventure. To be a part of what God is doing takes the human spirit much higher than Mount Everest. It reaches all the way to heaven.

Plus, it's a whole lot easier than saving money on the Friday after Thanksgiving!

# Send The Light

## FOREIGN MISSION BOARD MISSIONARY APPOINTMENT SERVICE

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, JACKSON  
6:30 P.M. — SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8

Preservice music for worship

Processional  
Hymn No. 586  
"We've A Story to Tell"

Prayer & Welcome  
Frank Pollard, Pastor,  
First Church-Jackson

Response & Introductions  
Jerry Rankin, FMB President

Missions Update  
Avery Willis, FMB Senior V.P.,

Hymn No. 4  
"To God Be The Glory"

Recommendation for Appointment  
Bill Blanchard  
Chairman, FMB

Missionary Testimonies

Appointment of Missionaries  
Bill Blanchard

Prayer of Dedication  
Frank Gunn, Pastor,  
First Church, Biloxi  
FMB Trustee

Special Music  
Lew King, Director

Charge to Missionaries  
Jerry Rankin

Time of Commitment  
Hymn No. 287  
"Take My Life, Lead Me Lord"

Offertory

Closing Song  
"My Tribute"

Organ Postlude

THE  
SECOND  
FRONT PAGE

THE BAPTIST  
**Record**

## Missionary service only few days away

By William H. Perkins Jr.  
Editor

Plans have been finalized at First Church, Jackson, for the first Southern Baptist foreign missionary appointment service in Mississippi in 12 years, according to Jim Baker, the church's administrative pastor.

The appointment service, scheduled for 6:30 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 8, in the church's 3,500-seat sanctuary, has aroused a great deal of interest across the state and generated a large number of calls to the church, Baker said.

Mississippi Baptist churches such as First Church, Brook-

haven; First Church, Jackson; Kewanee Church, Toomsaba; and Pace Church, Pace, are perennial leaders in giving to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions (see pages five and six of this issue).

In addition, two missionary candidates with Mississippi ties will be involved in the Jackson appointment service:

— Brad Roderick of Gulfport and his wife Gretchen, a Connecticut native, are seeking appointment as church planters in India. Brad Roderick, a Mississippi College graduate, is currently serving as coordina-

tor of new church extension for the Baptist Convention of Pennsylvania/New Jersey.

— Celeste Corey of Grenada is seeking appointment as an education coordinator for children of Southern Baptist missionaries in southern Asia and the Pacific. She has served in Singapore for the past two years through the Foreign Mission Board's International Service Corps.

"We are anticipating an overflow crowd. The choir room, which can seat up to 500 additional people, is being prepared to accommodate the overflow if the sanctuary reaches capacity," Baker pointed out.

Baker said there will be no reserved seating, so attendees should plan on arriving well before the service begins.

Special parking for church buses has been arranged in the expansive parking lot of the Sillers State Office Building, just off High Street and within walking distance of the church, according to Baker.

The Sillers lot will also be open for automobiles, but Baker urged bus drivers to make the effort to park there so church-owned parking lots, which are marked off in individual spaces for cars, can be fully utilized.

For safety reasons, bus drivers should unload passengers on the N. President Street side of the church instead of the busy N. State Street side, Baker said.

There is a direct entrance to the sanctuary from N. President Street, which is not the case on N. State Street, he added.

The church is also handicapped-accessible from the Mississippi Street side, Baker said.

Handicapped passengers should be dropped off under the covered drive on Mississippi Street, where they can proceed through Fellowship Hall East to eleva-

tors that will take them to the sanctuary level, he explained.

"Security officers with two-way radios will be posted outside around the church property. If there is an emergency or a problem of any kind, people can approach one of the security officers. Inside the church, people should look for ushers wearing First Baptist Church badges," Baker said.

The Visitor Information Center, located on the second floor near the sanctuary entrance, will also be staffed, he added.

Child care will be provided for preschool children up to age three. Childcare workers cannot feed the children or administer medicine, Baker said.

Children should be dropped off underneath the covered preschool drive at the N. State Street/College Street intersection, which is located at the northeast corner of the main church building, he said.

Like the handicapped-accessible drive, the preschool drive is strictly for off-loading with no parking allowed, Baker pointed out.

"Due to the large number of children we are expecting, we have asked that churches consider bringing a childcare worker along with them to assist us during the service," he said.

The previous missionary appointment service in Mississippi was held in April of 1984 at the Gulf Coast Coliseum in Biloxi.

Missionary candidates appointed during the Jackson service will join 4,200 Southern Baptist missionaries serving among 336 ethnic groups in 127 countries around the world.

For more information on foreign missions service, contact the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, P.O. Box 6767, Richmond, Va.

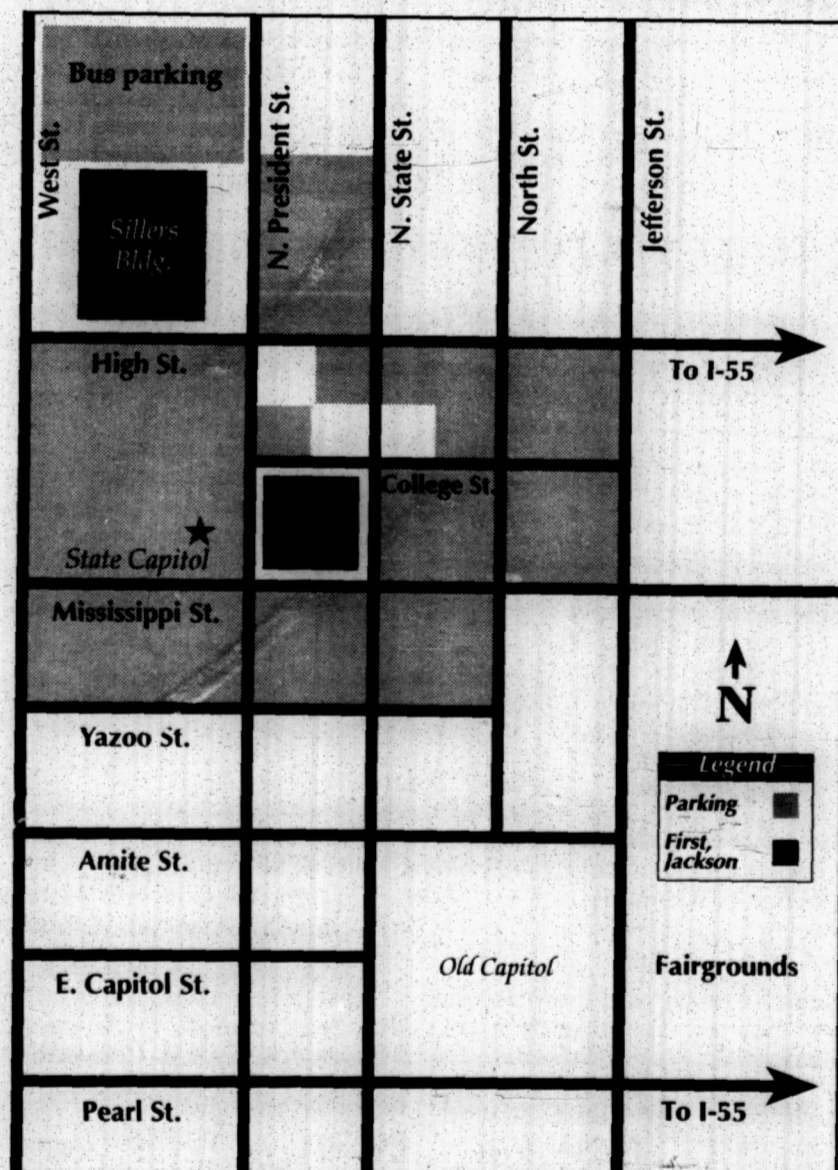
For more information on the Jackson missionary appointment service, contact First Church at (601) 949-1900.

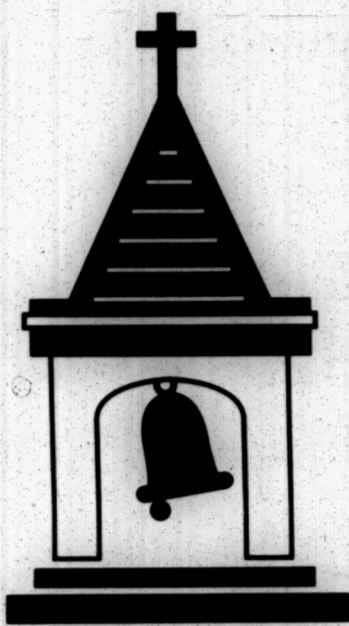
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## Churches on the move

### Clarification

In the Nov. 28 issue of "The Baptist Record," the data box on page four should have included the following information in reference to these two churches:

**First Church, Brandon** voted in November to purchase 32.6 acres of land near the Interstate 20. The express purpose of the purchase is for future expansion and possible relocation.

**Temple Church, Hattiesburg** has entered into a long-term lease on 53 acres of 16th section land in Lamar county, with the intention of expanding the ministry and having one church in two locations.

# Churches must face community change

By Carl M. White  
Associate Editor

Third in a series

One thing is for certain: whether change comes quickly or glacier slow, it is a reality in every community.

The failure of a church to adapt to the dynamics of change results in a failure of mission by that church.

As the community around a church changes, the church must respond to those changes if it is to have a viable ministry.

In the face of transitional forces, some churches decide to stay — a decision not to be taken lightly.

As Tom Roote, a professor at New Orleans Seminary and experienced consultant with Southern Baptist Churches in transitional communities points out, the Southern Baptist track record in transitional communities is not good.

Forest Hill Church in south Jackson is one exception.

Peaking in the 1970's with about 170 in Sunday School, the church dropped to a low of around 50, according to pastor Wayne McCullough.

However, the church is now on the upswing. A few weeks ago, 133 people attended

Sunday School for a Friend Day emphasis.

"We have made a commitment to stay," McCullough said.

This commitment came about a few years ago when the church was approached by an African-American church that was interested in purchasing the property.

The deacons met and the end result was a decision to stay, McCullough said.

"I would like to see a church in south Jackson that is open to having a ministry to the Jews and the gentiles," McCullough said. "Our ideal is to minister to whomever God sends this way."

Recently, two African-American families have joined the church.

In addition, the pastor says there are other ethnic members in the congregation.

"There are still people in our community who need to be reached. That hasn't changed. Our community may have changed, but the Great Commission did not," McCullough said.

Another church that has chosen to stay is Calvary Church, located on Capitol Street in Jackson. Jim Street is pastor.

Several years ago the church appointed a committee called "The Bold Extravaganza

Committee" to study the church's ministry and to explore its future.

The recommendation was to "remain faithful to the area of town where we have been for 95 years," according to Street.

It has not been an easy decision, Street observed. "We are not flooded with visitors or new members."

However, Calvary is ministering in unique and creative ways.

Two particularly successful areas are the music ministry and the outreach ministries into the community.

"We have extremely talented and creative people," Street said.

In the middle of a transitional community, they have continued to have what he called a "worship experience with dignity."

"Calvary has the first and largest special education program in the Mississippi Baptist Convention," Street said, "perhaps in the Southern Baptist Convention."

They also conduct intake interviews for the social ministries at Crestwood Center and the Stewpot, both in Jackson.

"We present the plan of salvation to every person we interview," Street said.

In addition, the Willowood Developmental Center and the Mustard Seed programs to the

handicapped each have a special relationship with Calvary Church.

Some of the lay people at Calvary were behind the founding of these programs, Street observed.

There are halfway houses and services for people who are discharged from a hospital or institution but are not yet ready to enter the community mainstream. Those people worship regularly with Calvary, Street pointed out.

While Street acknowledges that success stories are hard to find in transitional communities, he said Calvary is more than just a survival story.

A full 20% of the congregation comes from the surrounding neighborhood.

The other 80% come from all over the city of Jackson.

"There is a loyal cadre of people driving into Calvary every week. We would move away from one-fourth of our congregation if we relocated in any one direction, north, south, east or west," Street noted.

Calvary church is open to everyone who wishes to worship with them, Street said, and with a contagious tenacity, they are committed to ministering to their community.

Next week: Churches that die

## Brotherhood carpenters busy in Mississippi

By Carl M. White  
Associate Editor

South of Carthage, just off the road to Sebastopol, a trailer that has on its side "Carpenter Shop" sits next to a small church under construction. The trailer is filled with over \$10,000 worth of wood working equipment — and the promise of something special for the Hopewell Indian Church • New Choctaw Association.

Hopewell Indian Church received a set of pews and pulpit furniture built by Southern Baptist laymen and women.

M.B. Howard is the volunteer coordinator for the Brotherhood

Commission's Carpenter Shop ministry.

In three days, Howard, his wife Kathryn, and volunteers from Tennessee and Mississippi built 18 ten-foot pews, two deacon's benches, a pulpit, and an communion table.

It was all made from \$1,500 worth of timber purchased locally.

"It's nothing special," Howard said of the pine boards, "except what it will be used for."

The furniture is a bit rustic. "Not what you would see at a First Baptist Church," Howard

said. It has a special beauty to it. It is the beauty of the Lord's handiwork through Baptist volunteers.

Hopewell Indian Church was founded in 1885. Travis Willis, a member of the church and an ordained minister, said the building under construction is Hopewell's third.

The 241-member congregation is meeting temporarily in a school cafeteria half a mile down the road. Volunteers and church members have done all the construction, Willis said.

After the purchase of supplies, volunteers spent three days cutting, sanding, and staining wood, then assembling the furniture.

On this day there are 14 men and women at work assembling the pews.

Among them are R.J. and Vernoy Reynolds, Lloyd Brown and J.C. Delcomyn from Liberty Church in Forest; Bobby Kennedy from Pearl Valley Church, Wesson; H.B. and Kathryn Howard, along with Jim and Amelia Dicky from Tennessee.

"I've been with volunteer workers from Georgia and Tennessee," said Kathryn Howard of Selma, Tennessee. "I'm going to have to put the people of Mississippi up with them," she said.

Howard says this is the 16th set of pews built by the Brotherhood team.

They have built pews and

furniture for two other Mississippi churches, in Greenville and in Webster County.

In June they built pews in Atlanta for an African-American congregation.

For the past several years they have built furniture at Glorieta Assembly in New

Commission will merge with the Home Mission Board and the Radio and Television Commission to form the North American Mission Board.

Howard doesn't know how this work will fit in with the new organization, but he is certain that this kind of volunteer work will continue.



Lloyd Brown and J.C. Delcomyn, both of Liberty Church, Forest, and Bobby Kennedy of Pearl Valley Church, Wesson, assemble a pew for Hopewell Indian Church, New Choctaw Association (photo by Carl M. White)

Mexico and carried them across the border to churches in Mexico.

"This may be the last set built for the Brotherhood Commission," Howard said.

In June 1997 the Brotherhood

For more information, contact the Brotherhood Department, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone; (601) 968-3800 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651.

# State conventions meet around country

## NORTH CAROLINA

N.C. conservative re-elected; executive director Roy Smith sets retirement.

GREENSBORO, N.C. (BP) — Conservative pastor Greg Mathis of Mud Creek Church, Henderson, was re-elected president of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, turning back a challenge from moderates. The convention's executive director, Roy Smith, created more news at the Nov. 11-13 annual meeting with a condemnation of the politicizing of the state convention by conservatives and moderates and a surprise announcement he will retire at the end of 1997.

The new first vice president, Phillip Davis — the convention's first African American to hold office — unseated moderate incumbent Ann Smith, a Greensboro layperson and a former president of North Carolina Woman's Missionary Union.

Conservative pastor Kenneth Ridings, of Grassy Branch Church in Asheville, was re-elected second vice president.

## KENTUCKY

Kentucky convention votes to retain extra two percent of CP receipts.

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. (BP) — The Kentucky Baptist Convention will keep an extra 2% of Cooperative Program receipts for in-state use beginning in September 1997.

The recommendation was approved by messengers to the KBC annual meeting Nov. 12 at First Church, Bowling Green. After a lengthy period of debate, the measure was adopted by a 57% majority on a 664-503 vote.

In other action, the Kentucky convention elected as president Floyd Price, pastor of Scottsville Church in Scottsville, Ky.; approved creation of a new entity to own and manage the convention's two campgrounds; rejected a motion to study allowing churches to determine their own percentage split of Cooperative Program gifts between the KBC and Southern Baptist Convention; and heard the first reading of a motion that could amend the convention's definition of qualifications for seating messengers.

Messengers also passed four resolutions, including one expressing opposition to partial-birth abortions.

## FLORIDA

Florida convention cites Bible as key to defining 'cooperating' church.

LAKELAND, Fla. (BP) — Keith Thomas, pastor of the First Church, West Palm Beach, Fla., one of the largest churches along Florida's Gold Coast, was elected president of the Florida Baptist State Convention during its Nov. 11-13 annual meeting at the Lakeland Center.

Thomas, 40, who ran without opposition for the one-year term, represents the third president in as many years from the baby-boom generation.

In other business, after a spirited 45-minute discussion, messengers approved a lengthy document that defines parameters for church-

es wanting to affiliate with the state convention.

The parameters require that churches requesting an "at-large status," without affiliating through a local association, first must agree with a statement of faith consistent with the Baptist Faith and Message. That document states that the Bible is "truth, without any mixture of error."

## OKLAHOMA

Okla. Baptists welcome new executive; approve convention overhaul.

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP) — A new executive director-treasurer and a new state convention structure were approved during the 91st annual meeting of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma (BGCO), Nov. 11-13 at Oklahoma City's Quail Springs Church and Myriad Convention Center.

Native Oklahoman Anthony Jordan, who has served 14 years as pastor of Northwest Church in Oklahoma City, was approved as executive director-treasurer.

The restructuring will move the BGCO from 12 departments to three "teams" that will use more consultants than in the past and change from being "program-driven" to being "purpose-driven."

The 1,408 messengers approved a 1997 Cooperative Program annual budget of \$18.25 million, a 1.82% increase over the 1996 budget of \$17.9 million. As in the current year, the new budget allocates 60% to Oklahoma Baptist ministries and 40% to Southern Baptist Convention national and international ministries.

Officers elected were Ted Kersh, pastor of Village Church, Oklahoma City, president; David Willets, pastor of Parkview Church, Tulsa, first vice president; and John Allen, director of missions for Enon Association, based in Ardmore, second vice president.

## KANSAS-NEBRASKA

Kansas-Nebraska Baptists honor exec 'Peck' Lindsay for 25 years of service.

LAWRENCE, Kan. (BP) — R. Rex "Peck" Lindsay, executive director of the Kansas-Nebraska Convention of Southern Baptists, was honored for his 25 years of service to the convention during the 51st annual meeting of the two-state Baptist body.

Messenger registration totaled 261 for the Oct. 28-30 sessions at the Holiday Inn Holidome, Lawrence, Kan.

## NORTHWEST

\$2 million bond offering OK'd for completion of Northwest Baptist Center.

EUGENE, Ore. (BP) — Messengers to the 49th annual meeting of the Northwest Baptist Convention approved a bond offering of \$2 million to complete construction of the \$4 million Northwest Baptist Center, the new headquarters in Vancouver, Wash.

The convention, which attracted 495 messengers Nov. 12-14 at the Eugene (Ore.) Conference Center, also approved a budget of \$4,091,139, up from the current budget of \$3,941,689. The new budget includes

anticipated Cooperative Program gifts of \$2,135,175, with the percentage of CP gifts to Southern Baptist Convention national and international ministries remaining at 31%.

Terry Little, pastor of Crossover Church, Mead, Wash., was re-elected president. Don Reeves, pastor of Grant Avenue Church, Corvallis, Ore., was elected first vice president and Steve Schenewerk, pastor of Community Baptist Church, Winston, Ore., was elected second vice president, both without opposition.

## CALIFORNIA

California Baptists debate women as pastors, Disney values.

PASADENA, Calif. (BP) — Another attempt to reject messengers from a church with a woman pastor and a move to boycott the Walt Disney Company for anti-Christian values failed during the California Southern Baptist Convention's 56th annual meeting Nov. 12-13 in Pasadena.

## ARIZONA

Ariz. convention to focus on churches' missions aims, Cooperative Program.

PHOENIX (BP) — Arizona Southern Baptists set a course for the future at their 68th annual meeting Nov. 12-13 at North Phoenix Church.

The future will entail a state convention emphasis on "Serving Churches on Mission," which also was the theme of the two-day meeting. In addition, churches will have more flexibility in their Cooperative Program giving in the coming year.

## NEW MEXICO

N.M. Baptists add laypeople to convention executive board.

CARLSBAD, N.M. (BP) — Messengers to the 84th annual meeting of the Baptist Convention of New Mexico approved a proposal to decrease the number of members of its executive board, while increasing the number of lay members and increasing executive board terms.

## MICHIGAN

Michigan Baptists honor prosecutor for taking Kevorkian to court.

MIDLAND, Mich. (BP) — Michigan Baptists honored the prosecutor who has taken suicide doctor Jack Kevorkian to court during their Nov. 5-7 annual meeting at Emmanuel Church, Midland.

In other convention action, messengers sent the proposed budget of \$2,833,906 back to the executive board for revisions.

As presented, the budget entailed no increase over the current year due to tight finances, and it would have scaled back

Michigan Cooperative Program giving to Southern Baptist causes from 32 to 25%. The convention

will meet again in a special called meeting Jan. 30, 1997, at Bethany Church, Lansing, in an attempt to approve an amended budget.

All officers were elected by acclamation: president, Ray Shelton, pastor of Friendship Church, Lincoln Park; first vice president, James Kennedy, pastor of Mt. Carmel Church, Flint; second vice president, George Fountain, bivocational pastor of Raisinville Church, Monroe; and recording secretary, Mike Lee, pastor of Gorham Church, Jackson.

## INDIANA

Indiana Baptists underscore Southern Baptist commitments, maintain CP.

INDIANAPOLIS (BP) — A resolution of support of Southern Baptist Convention ministries was adopted by messengers to the 38th annual meeting of the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana.

A 1997 budget of \$3.4 million was adopted by the convention, a 2.4% increase over the current year. From the contributions given by Indiana's 558 churches and missions, encompassing nearly 100,000 members, 32.25% is committed to SBC causes, the same percent of budget as the current year.

## TENNESSEE

Tennessee Baptists hear Henry Blackaby six times.

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Six Bible studies led by Henry Blackaby were featured during the 122nd annual meeting of the Tennessee Baptist Convention Nov. 12-13 at Two Rivers Church, Nashville.

In business sessions, messengers defeated a motion to change the convention's bylaws to give a measure of nominating powers to the convention president.

Herbert Higdon, pastor of Cross Roads Church near Jackson, a retired director of missions and outgoing president of the executive board of the Tennessee Convention, was elected convention president, defeating Ronnie Wilburn, pastor of Meridian Church, Jackson, in a runoff, 528-481, a scant 47 votes.

A third candidate, M.B. Howard of Covington, was eliminated in the first ballot.

*In a world filled with confusion... Is there any hope?*

**God's desire is to give you hope.**

*"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes..."*  
Romans 1:16

**Sin robs us of this life of hope!**

*"For the wages of sin is death..."*  
Romans 6:23

**Jesus cares for you!**

*"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."*  
Romans 5:8

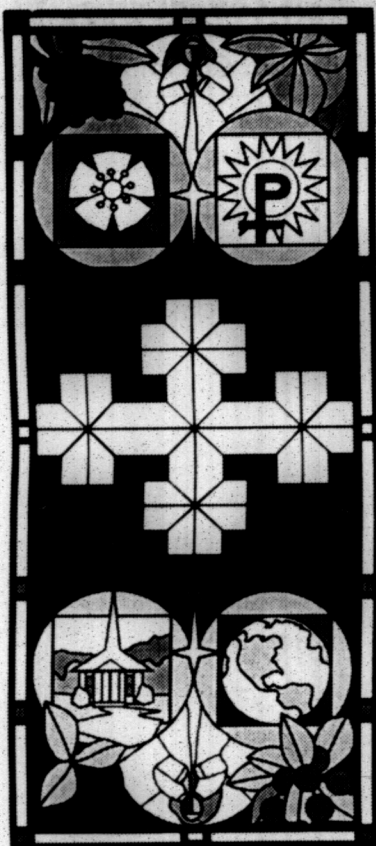
**It's your choice.**

*You must decide for yourself if you are willing to turn from your sins and ask Jesus into your heart.*

*"If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved."*  
Romans 10:9

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

# 1996 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering



The stained glass window chosen to represent the 1996 Week of Prayer for Foreign Missions and the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering contains a number of symbolic features. At the center is a cross crosslet, reflecting the spread of the Gospel to the four corners of the earth. The prayerful angels at the top and bottom represent rejoicing at the birth of Christ. At right above the crosslet is the Christmas rose, which blossoms only at Christmas. At left above the crosslet is the combination of Chi Rho and the sun combined, symbolizing Christ as the source of light, life, and truth. At left below the crosslet is a church, symbolizing discipleship and commitment. At right below the crosslet is the world, symbolizing the lost waiting to hear the Good News. The squares around each of the four symbols represent the limitations of humanity, while the circles reflect God's empowering strength.

## Missionary family faces threats, dangers

By Dana Williamson  
Oklahoma Baptist Messenger

DEL CITY, Okla. — Southern Baptists in the United States prayed for Paul Stevens on his birthday last Dec. 12. That's precisely when he and his wife, Ruth, Foreign Mission Board missionaries in the Philippines, needed prayer the most.

That day, the couple was Christmas shopping in Davao City when they received a message in a letter delivered to their home in Malita, threatening to kill their entire family and helpers unless a great sum of money was paid.

The entire family — including Cheri, 12, Sam, 10, Angela, 7, and Katrina, 2 — stayed away from Malita for 10 days, then returned to see if there was further word about the threat.

Two days after Christmas, a pastor's wife in Malita told the Stevenses she had heard their children were going to be kidnapped.

Paul and Ruth immediately packed up the children and left to celebrate New Year's with another missionary family. Missionary administrator Sam Stallings advised the family to relocate.

"It was a hard decision to leave," said Paul. "We had invested so much time in the area."

Besides, the Stevenses weren't sure the threat was real. They had lived for the past three years with the problem of heavily armed bandits raiding villages in the area.

"But it's a little different when your name is on the targeted letter," admitted Ruth.

On Jan. 2, the couple was praying for specific instructions from God.

"I was reading about Joseph being warned in a dream not to return to his home because of a threat to the young Jesus," Paul remembered.

"We realized even Jesus had to evacuate," added Ruth.

So in January the family left the coastal town where they had invested 12 years and moved into an apartment in the Chinese district in Davao City.

Paul started a new job researching Filipino language groups.

The couple were appointed missionaries in 1982 and, after language study, began serving in Malita, an isolated spot with no electricity, no phones and no medical service.

They visited the 40 churches in the area by boat, horseback or on foot.

"It is the poorest of poor areas," noted Paul. "Some of the churches had an annual income of \$10."

They started a training center to teach such things as agriculture and health care and shared the gospel in the storytelling tradition of the Filipinos.

They had the joy of seeing the work grow from 40 to 120 churches.

With their relocation, Paul's job now is to establish viable church bases with every ethnic group in the southern Philippines. "That way, people could continue if missionaries had to leave," Paul explained.

The Stevenses have been very aware of support from churches in the United States.

"When we received the death threat letter, I told Paul that all those people were praying for him on his birthday," said Ruth. "I knew the Lord hadn't abandoned us."

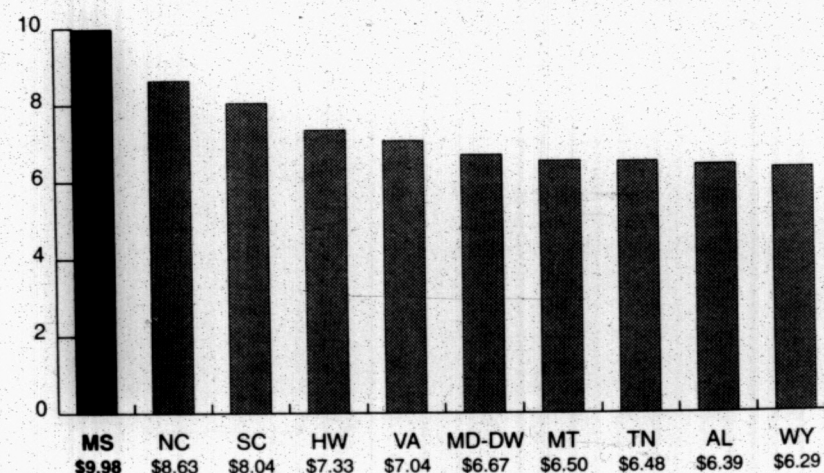
Paul said his mother wanted the family to come back and live in Paul's hometown of Oklahoma City "where it is safe."

A few weeks later, a terrorist's bomb tore off the front of the federal building in Oklahoma City.

The danger and sacrifice of following God sometimes threatens physical safety, Paul observed. "You can't say the safest place in the world is in God's will, because the cross wasn't a safe place. But if you're in God's will, whatever happens is okay."



Paul and Ruth Stevens, Foreign Mission Board missionaries to the Philippines, sort through their "missionary things" — keepsakes they will display at a missions conference to help others understand their ministry. Strong home-base support is important to the Stevenses, who needed the prayers of their friends when their lives were threatened this past December. In the background, their children — Cheri, Sam, Angela, and Kate — entertain themselves with items from the container. The theme for the 1996 Week of Prayer for Foreign Missions and the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering is "Missionaries: From Churches With Love." (FMB Photo by Kent Harville)

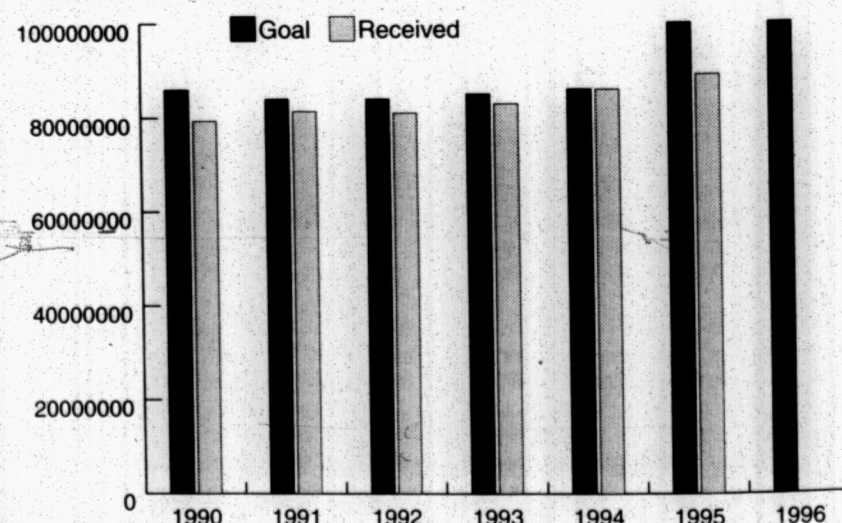


1995 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering  
Per Member Giving

### Top 10 Mississippi churches (per member giving)

1. Kewanee Church	Toomsba	\$153.85
2. Pace Church	Pace	98.06
3. First Church	Brookhaven	93.01
4. Roxie Church	Roxie	87.93
5. First Church	Columbus	52.07
6. First Church	Natchez	48.36
7. Oak Grove Church	Lake	48.28
8. Liberty Church	Toomsba	47.98
9. Shiloh Church	Port Gibson	46.47
10. Lucien Church	Brookhaven	45.96

Source: Annual Church Profiles



Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, 1990-1996

What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the

# HOUSE TOPS

Matthew 10:27 NAS

December 5, 1196

HouseTops is a **Baptist Record** supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's **Office of Communication**.



## Just A Reminder

The 1997 Area Keyboard Festivals are taking place January 23-25 at several sites around the state.

If you are interested in participating, registrations are due December 13, 1996.

Mail to:  
Dot Pray  
Church Music Department  
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board  
P.O. Box 530  
Jackson, MS 39205



## Christian Performing Arts Festival

February 28 - March 1  
Woodland Hills Baptist Church, Jackson

Offering conferences for both the experienced and inexperienced in:

Drama  
Clowning  
Puppetry  
Church Recreation

For further information contact the Discipleship and Family Ministry Department of the MBCB at 968-3800 in Jackson or toll-free 1-800-748-1651.

## YOUTH EVANGELISM CONFERENCE

MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE  
CLINTON  
DECEMBER 30-31, 1996

### FEATURING

**SPEAKER**  
Keith Naylor

**MUSIC**  
Paul Horton

How

is the  
Love of

# DEEP

Christ

**CONCERT**  
Wes King

**DRAMA**  
"Mog & Wog"

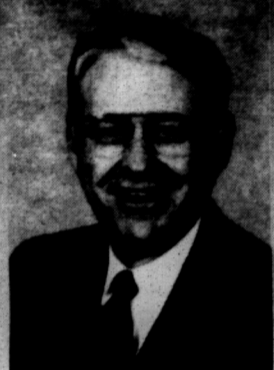
## DON'T MISS IT!

GREAT LOOKING, HIGH QUALITY T-SHIRTS AVAILABLE  
\$8 - SHORT SLEEVE      \$10 - LONG SLEEVE

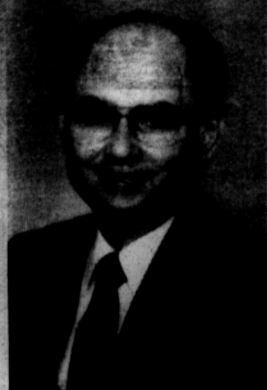
# Institute for Equipping Churches

## B E Y O N D 2 0 0 0

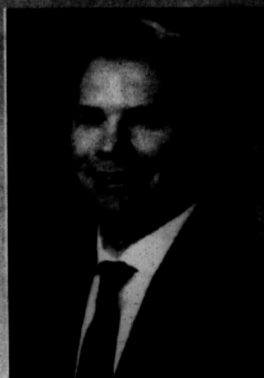
February 27 - March 1, 1997 Ridgecrest Baptist Church, Madison



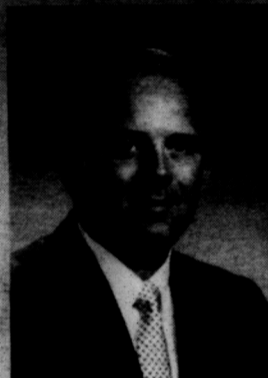
DWAYNE BEATY



GENE NABI



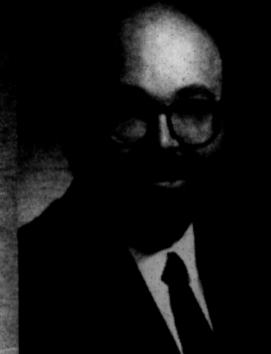
NEAL CORDLE



KEN MARLER



JERRI HERRING



JAMES HARGRAVE

The purpose of the Institute for Equipping Churches Beyond 2000 is to provide quality training at one place and time for as many people as possible.

Your church will benefit in many ways from this time of training. Workers do a better job and tend to serve longer when they are trained. Pupils are happier and more attentive when their leaders are trained.

Your participation in this institute is most warmly requested. The difference in churches is leaders and the difference in leaders is training!

### THURSDAY

8:30-11:30 a.m.

#### Senior Adult Rally

Johnnie Foster, Dwayne Beaty, Faye Brown

9:00-11:30 a.m.

#### Preschool/Children's Forum

James Hargrave

Kay Henry

2:00-4:00 p.m.

#### First Contact

Kay Henry

#### WMU Leadership Team Update

WMU State Staff

2:00-4:30 p.m.

#### Doctrine Study Overview

John Gilbert

5:00-6:45 p.m.

#### Pastor/Staff Banquet

Bill Causey

5:45-6:45 p.m.

#### Minister's Wives Seminar

Rhonda Kelley

7:00-8:00 p.m.

#### Fresh Encounter Overview

David Carter

7:00-9:00 p.m.

#### Age Group Teaching Series

How to teach preschoolers using the resource *Love, Laughter and Learning*-Kay Henry

How to teach children using the resource *Crayons, Computers and Kids*-James Hargrave

How to teach teenagers using the resource *Connected, Committed and a Little Bit Crazy*-Mark Lott

How to teach adults using the resource *Vision, Variety and Vitality*-Neal Cordle

8:00-9:00 p.m.

#### Experiencing God Overview

David Carter

### FRIDAY

9:00 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

#### Growth Spiral

Ken Marler

9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

#### MasterLife Overview

David Carter

9:00-11:30 a.m.

#### Truth Matters Overview

Ron Mumbower

#### Special Education

Gene Nabi

#### Preacher's Conference

Equipping Team

#### Women's Celebration

Rhonda Kelley

1:00-3:00 p.m.

#### Preacher's Conference

Equipping Team

#### Women's Celebration (cont.)

Rhonda Kelley

#### Truth Matters

Ron Mumbower

6:00-9:00 p.m.

#### Drama Festival-Woodland Hills BC

Wes Pegues

7:00-9:00 p.m.

#### SS Directors

Jerri Herring

#### Outreach Directors

Ken Marler

#### DT Adult Resources Showcase

David Carter

#### Singles Ministries

Joey Rodgers

10:00 p.m.-midnight

#### Singles Rally

Al Fike

### SATURDAY

9:00-11:00 a.m.

#### DT Director Seminar

Mose Dangerfield

#### WMU Leadership Team Update

WMU State Staff

9:00-11:30 a.m.

#### How to Make the Most Out of Sunday School Age Group Curriculum

Neal Cordle, Mark Lott,

James Hargrave, Kay Henry

9:00 a.m.-noon (cont.)

#### Sunday School Directors

Jerri Herring

#### Outreach Directors

Ken Marler

10:00-11:00 a.m.

#### Family Ministry Overview

Glenn Shows

11:00 a.m.-noon

#### Making Love Last Forever Overview

Glenn Shows

### LEADERSHIP TEAM

Dwayne Beaty-min. with Sr. Adults, Longview, TX

Faye Brown-author, humorist, Moundsville, AL

David Carter-Adult DT specialist, BSSB

Neal Cordle-Adult consultant, BSSB

Mose Dangerfield-DT director, MBCB

Al Fike-comedian, Garland, TX

Johnnie Foster-dramatist, Aberdeen, MS

John Gilbert-consultant, BSSB

James Hargrave-Children's consultant, BSSB

Kay Henry-Preschool consultant, BSSB

Jerri Herring-consultant, BSSB

Rhonda Kelley-professor, NOBTS, New Orleans, LA

Chuck Kelley-president, NOBTS, New Orleans, LA

Mark Lott-Youth consultant, MBCB

Ken Marler-consultant, BSSB

Ron Mumbower-min. with Counseling, Jackson, MS

Gene Nabi-Special Education consultant, BSSB

Joey Rodgers-min. with Singles, Jackson, MS

Glenn Shows-DT consultant, MBCB



### Christmas Family Worship

**Celebration of Joy** - Third Week - Lighting of the third candle.

"...Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." Luke 2:10

The birth of Christ is surrounded by joy. The Son of God brought hope, peace, and joy as well as eternal life to those who accept Him. There is no greater joy.

**Prayer:** Eternal Lord, fill our minds with everything that is true and pure and worthy of praise. Amen.

**Song:** "Joy To The World"

#### Suggested Family Activities:

At dinner each evening, pray for those whose Christmas cards arrived in your mailbox today.



## Have A Joyous Holiday Season



### Christmas Family Worship

**Celebration of Love** - Fourth Week - Lighting of the fourth candle.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son...." (John 3:16)  
"...His love endures forever."  
(2 Chronicles 5:13b)

Love means many things at different times. When Jesus came into the world the word "love" took on another meaning. No other love can be greater than this love, a Savior who would give His life because He loves us.

Monday - Isaiah 7:10-15

Tuesday - Luke 1:26-38

Christmas Eve or Christmas Day -  
Matthew 1:18-23

The first candle reminds us of Christ, the prophet's light of hope. The second candle reminds us of the warmth of light Mary and Joseph found in the stable. The third candle reminds us of the light which surrounded the shepherds when they were told of Jesus' birth. The fourth candle reminds us of the star which guided the shepherds to Jesus. The fifth candle (center white candle) represents Christ's birth. He has come!

**Song:** "Silent Night"

#### Suggested Family Activities:

Reflect what the Christmas season has meant to each family member this year. Hold hands and give each family member the gift of gratitude for one thing that is remembered about that person that has been especially meaningful this past year. Small children may be asked to give a special hug to each family member and encouraged to say, "I am glad you are my sister (or brother)."

**Prayer:** Thank You, God, for Christmas! Help us to live out our love for one another as You did for us. Strengthen our family bond as you pour out your blessings upon us. Thank You, God, for our family. Amen.

### NEW MasterLife WORKSHOPS

First Baptist Church, Madison  
January 10-11, 1997  
Friday, 6:30 - 9 p.m. and Saturday, 9 a.m. - noon

Ridgecrest Baptist Church, Madison  
February 28, 1997  
9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Both conferences will be led by David Carter. The cost will be \$26 and is due by January 6, 1997. Make checks payable to Mississippi Baptist Convention Board and send to:  
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board  
Glenn Shows  
P. O. Box 530  
Jackson, MS 39205

## DEACON EMPHASIS WEEK

### Deacon Emphasis Week . . .

is a plan with specific actions that highlights deacon ministries and involves deacon training and service.

#### The Purpose Of This Emphasis Is To:

- Focus on the biblical role of deacons
- Build a team relationship in ministry
- Secure involvement in specific ministry
- Develop skills for ministry

Deacon Emphasis Week may be conducted during January 12-19, 1997, or any other time during the year.

To participate, the deacons would choose at least two actions and perform them during a specified time (preferably during **Deacon Emphasis Week**). See the possible activities listed in this brochure.

A certificate of recognition will be presented to each deacon body that officially participates.

#### Suggested Activities . . .

- Study a deacon diploma book
- Conduct a deacon's retreat or conference
- Conduct Pastor/Staff Appreciation Day
- Enter the Deacon Family Ministry Plan
- Sponsor a special ministry project
- Sponsor a mission tour
- Sponsor a project to improve church fellowship
- Listen to cassette tapes
- Watch video tapes
- Enter Deacon/Pastor Covenant to work together as partners in ministry
- Subscribe to "The Deacon" or "Growing Churches" magazine for all deacons
- Promote and pray for revival
- Organize and conduct effort to reclaim inactive church members
- Conduct an in-house survey of the local church
- Conduct deacon-led witnessing/visitation/prospect-find activities
- Conduct activities to strengthen church fellowship

For other projects and information, contact:

Church Administration-  
Pastoral Ministries Department  
Matt Buckles, Consultant  
P. O. Box 530  
Jackson, MS 39205  
(601)968-3800, extension 3907;  
or 1-800-748-1651



- 4-85** MISS SHARON PARKER, William Carey College,  
P.O. Box 1353, Hattiesburg, MS 39401  
Parents: Vincent and Sharon, Conference/Encampment
- 5-75** MR. ADRIAN G. MARTIN, Casilla de Correo 5  
8400 San Carlos de Bariloche, ARGENTINA  
Parents: Asbury and Hope, General Evangelism
- 9-91** MR. JONATHAN TROTTER, P.O. Box 4450  
Stanger, 4450, REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA  
Parents: Frank and Dede
- 10-84** MISS LINDSAY N. HEARN, 425 Ford Street  
Columbia, MS 39429  
Parents: James and Brenda, General Evangelism; SERVE IN TOGO
- 15-81** MR. AARON G MASSEY, Bolanos 141,  
1407 Buenos Aries, ARGENTINA  
Parents: Gregory and Karen, Music Promotion
- 15-79** MISS DEEANN BOOTH, 233 Stonecastle Drive  
Brandon, MS 39042-8072  
Parents: Jim and Edith Ann, Language Pastor (Deaf)
- 21-90** MR. WILLIAM HUTCHINSON, P.O. Box 413  
Long Beach, MS 39560-5324  
Parents: Michael & Lynn, Church Planters; SERVE IN WEST AFRICA

# Pray this day for...

December 6, 1996 - January 16, 1997

Prayer Ministry Office • P. O. Box 530 • Jackson, MS 39205-0530 • Phone 968-3800, Ext. 3904 • Mississippi PrayerLine 1-800-787-PRAY

*"Think of Susannah Wesley who, in spite of the fact that she had nineteen children, found time to shut herself in her room for a full hour each day, alone with God. My friends, it is not so much a case of finding time as it is of making time. And we can make time if we will." - Oswald Smith*

Pray for the Internet course on Experiencing God. There are 750 groups in 35 countries who most likely will not be reached by any church.

For cancer victims and those who minister to them such as Ronald McDonald Houses where patients and their families can stay when they need to.

Some 13 million adults who are non-Christians attend Sunday School of some type. Pray that the small group Bible studies will influence them to believe in Christ.

Praise God for the great hymns we sing in worship services. "People learn more theology from the hymns they sing than from the sermons they hear," says Harry Eskew, professor of music history and hymnology, NOBTS.

Pray for disaster relief teams sponsored by WMU, Home Mission Board, Brotherhood Commission and the Foreign Mission Board. Disaster teams can be ready to respond to disaster all over the country within several hours.

Pray for Foreign Missions in December as we emphasize the theme "Missionaries: From Churches With Love." Also pray that our Lottie Moon offering goal of \$100 million will be reached and even exceeded.

So many people seldom think about their relationship to the Lord. Pray that each Christian will have the courage to witness to each person wherever they may have an opportunity.

Pray that more young men and women will become interested in becoming involved in missions as a volunteer or as a career missionary.

Thank God that his Kingdom is growing around the world. Every minute, 15 previously unevangelized people receive a tract. Ever minute, 27 previously unevangelized people received a copy of the Bible or a portion of it.

Pray for the Muslim people in Southern Sumatra to believe in the Prince of Peace who can heal their civil unrest and save their souls.

Pray that God will provide a way for the Lampungese, a peoples group of more than one million Indonesians, to hear of Christ in the coming year.

Pray for physicians to answer God's invitation to minister in Indonesia and spread the hope of life in Christ.

Pray that the lost people in Alaska who are running from God and/or the law will turn to God and experience forgiveness and love this holiday season.

Pray for Wyoming Southern Baptists, despite isolation and harsh climate, to share Christ with the unchurched half of the population.

Pray for the 650 Southern Baptist churches sharing Christ in the Los Angeles area where 15 million people live.

The Southern Baptist Convention now numbers more than 45,000 congregations. Pray for church starters as the convention strives for 50,000 churches by the year 2000.

All of 81,355 home missions volunteers in 1995 broke the record for volunteers in one year. Pray that Southern Baptists will keep volunteering to strengthen God's work.

**Christmas Day**  
Pray that God will bless and comfort missionaries and their children who cannot be with each other to celebrate Christmas.

In 1995, Southern Baptists entered 35 counties in the U.S. for the first time. Pray for church planters and volunteers who help evangelize new areas.

Chinese professionals in the city of Jinja, Uganda, were resistant to the gospel. One engineer believed, and now a Bible study has begun. Pray that many will receive Christ and have opportunities for discipleship.

Pray for the Brahui, an unreached people group of 2.5 million who live in Pakistan and Afghanistan. In this Sunni Muslim tribe are only two known believers. Pray for boldness for them to tell others.

Pray for Thailand. Recently a medical team ministered in two Yao villages never before touched by the gospel. Pray that efforts to reach these people will succeed.

For the Youth Evangelism Conference, Mississippi College; 1 pm, 30th-3:30 pm, 31st, sponsored by the Evangelism Department.

Praise God that Russian Baptists started nearly 200 churches last year, baptizing almost 10,000 people. Thank God for visas that allow missionaries to help them.

January is a time for looking back over the past year and making resolutions to form new habits, etc. Pray that you will find what God has planned for you this year.

Pray for adult MKs wherever they live in the world, that their life experiences in missions will give them a bold, positive witness.

Ever 15 seconds in the U.S. a woman is beaten by her husband or partner. Every minute, a woman in the US is raped. Pray that women will be protected from all kinds of abuse.

Pray that we may prioritize the things that are most important in our lives in order to use our time wisely.

Pray for hospital chaplains who minister to patients and their families in most hospitals.

Think of someone in your circle of friends, relatives, or acquaintances who needs prayer and pray for them.

Does the color of someone's skin make a difference in how you respond to them? Pray that Christians will be willing to cross racial barriers and share Jesus' love.

China is the 3rd largest country in the world, with 8 major languages and 600 dialects. It is the home to as many as 150 distinct people groups, including the Bai people of Southwest China, who have little opportunity to hear the gospel. Pray for other Chinese Christians to come in contact with the Bai and that they will be able to share the gospel with them.

The Turkmen, a Central Asian people group of over two million has only about 20 Christians. Pray for this handful of believers to effectively share the good news with their own people.

Pray for Pat O'Connell, associate pastor of Fraser Valley Baptist Church, Winter Park, Colorado, as he and other resort ministry missionaries share their faith with resort workers, and hotel staff, most of whom have little knowledge of the gospel.

Pray for volunteer literacy teachers, such as those at Orlando's Downtown Baptist Church, as they share the gospel through English classes. Pray for the immigrants as they hear the plan of salvation, often for the first time.

Over 2,400 Southern Baptist-endorsed chaplains served in various settings during 1995. Pray that more Baptists will feel led to become military chaplains.

Missions volunteers give missionaries much-needed support. Ask God to call volunteers outside the southern U.S. and in urban areas, two places where they are critically needed.

Beginning new ethnic churches requires physical resources and leadership. Pray that both will be found in abundance so that the many ethnic groups in America will find places of worship.

Today's self-centered society encourages preoccupation with our own desires. Pray that Christians will take to heart Philippians 2:4 "Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others."

Adore God for His patience and abounding love as described in Psalm 103:8 "The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love." Pray that many unreached people will discover His love and forgiveness in a personal way today.

## CONFERENCE FOR CHURCH ADMINISTRATORS

It is not too early for those responsible for the business end of church work to begin planning to attend the Church Business Administrators' Conference, January 23, at Woodland Hills Church in Jackson. Topics will deal with central purchasing and materials management, food service, building maintenance and property, payroll and employees, and managing church finances with integrity.

### MISSISSIPPI SINGLE MINISTERS FELLOWSHIP RETREAT

January 23 - 24, 1997  
Ramada Coliseum, Jackson

Thursday, 6 p.m.  
Friday, 8:30 - 11:30 a.m.  
Agenda will be set by arrival time

The focus will be on paid staff ministers with responsibility for singles. Special guest will be Steve Smith, Minister with Singles, Prestonwood Baptist Church, Dallas, Texas. The cost is \$50 which does not include lodging and meals and is due by January 8, 1997. Make your check payable to Mississippi Baptist Convention Board and mail to:

Mississippi Baptist Convention Board  
Glenn Shows  
P.O. Box 530  
Jackson, MS 39205

# HOUSE TOPS

# Christmas Offering

## Southern Baptists rally around grieving family

By Trennis Henderson  
Arkansas Baptist

CHERRY VALLEY, Ark. — Andrew Nicholson's headstone in Tyre Cemetery near Cherry Valley, Ark., stands as a silent tribute to the brief life of the 14-year-old missionary kid. It also reminds Southern Baptists to keep rallying around missionary families in times of overwhelming crisis.

Andrew died early last year when a swarm of killer bees drove him over a cliff in Panama's Chame Mountains. As his parents and siblings struggled with Andrew's tragic death, Baptists from Arkansas to Panama ministered to the grieving family.

Glenn and Pauline Nicholson leaned heavily on the emotional support of missionary colleagues even before their son's body was recovered from the area's dense jungle. Glenn hiked up to the accident site while Pauline, unable to make the rugged climb because of recent surgery, was forced to remain behind.

The first day's search was

suspended at nightfall with no word on whether Andrew was still alive. Friends prayed with the family throughout the night. Once the search resumed the next morning, word came quickly that Andrew's body had been located.

"The doctors came and told me they had found Andrew and he wasn't alive," Glenn recalled. "I realized I couldn't do anything more for Andrew so I went back down the mountain to join Pauline and their 16-year-old son, Nathan.

"It's very hard to accept. It's your worst nightmare," Pauline said tearfully. "I remember looking at the mountain and saying, 'I won't accept this.' I've always hated death."

While rescuers searched for her son, Pauline said she was comforted by a vision of her son's smiling face assuring her that he was fine, but no longer with them. "That's what got me going again. That's what I needed at the time," she said. "I had a real sense of comfort and peace at that point. God knows what we need to survive whatever happens.

"It was hard to face reality, but when it's your child, you have to accept it," she said. "You don't think you can survive it, but when you need the strength, God gives it to you."

A crisis like that stretches one's faith to the limit, Glenn emphasized.

"Circumstances don't change the character of God. God is good no matter what the circumstances. Through the circumstances, he is there to encourage us and strengthen us."

As news of Andrew's death spread, Christian friends rallied around the family.

While the Nicholsons coped with the numbing details of travel plans and funeral arrangements, co-workers stepped in to handle everything from polishing their shoes and packing their luggage to arranging their flight to the U.S.

By the time they arrived in Pauline's hometown of Cherry Valley, "we were receiving telephone calls, cards, and letters



from all over the United States," Glenn said.

Financial donations to cover the cost of travel and funeral expenses poured in from churches and associations where the family had served in previous years.

A congregation in Georgia where Andrew's older sister, Jennifer, is a member, paid the expenses for her to fly to Arkansas to be with her family. Members of Cherry Valley Church purchased the headstone for Andrew's grave.

"The spirit of the gifts was so overwhelming," Glenn said. "I don't think you realize the support system is there until a crisis comes and you discover how vast that support system is. You realize you don't stand alone in this moment."

A few weeks after Andrew's funeral, the Nicholsons returned to Panama, where Glenn serves as a field evangelist. They recently returned to Arkansas, where Nathan, now 18, is a freshman at Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia.

Glenn and Pauline are serving this year as the university's missionaries-in-residence.

"I don't think we would have ever made it through Andrew's death and been able to function again unless we knew people were praying for us," Pauline added. "People are ministers of God's grace."

Pauline and Glenn Nicholson, Foreign Mission Board missionaries to Panama, and their son Nathan, a freshman at Ouachita University in Arkadelphia, Ark., look at a quilt made for them by supporters in one of the Arkansas congregations they served before going to the field. The loving support of Southern Baptist churches helped the Nicholsons through the trauma of losing their younger son, Andrew, in a 1995 incident with killer bees in Panama. The theme for the 1996 Week of Prayer for Foreign Missions and the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering is "Missionaries: From Churches with Love." (FMB photo by Bob Carey)

## From Kentucky to Honduras, with love

By Wally Poor  
Foreign Mission Board

LA CEIBA, Honduras - This is a love story.

It's about God's love as it flowed through committed Southern Baptists from Kentucky to nurture the lives of Ken and Tammy Cummins and equip them, in turn, to share that love with the people of this Honduran city.

Now the love has been returned by the Baptists of Honduras toward the Cumminses, the churches that sent them, and volunteers who have enhanced their ministry during their first term as Foreign Mission Board missionaries.

The love was evident as the Cumminses joined hands with Pastor Santos Diaz Archillo and his wife, Edith.

All four wept as they prayed and said goodbye before the missionaries returned to the United States for a year-long furlough at First Church, Princeton, Ky.

The church building in which they stood, in the city of Sonaguerra, was another evidence of love.

For six weeks, teams of volunteers from Southern Baptist churches in North Carolina,

South Carolina, and Kentucky came to help Pastor Santos and the members of his church build a meeting place.

The Cumminses finished their first term with an impressive list of accomplishments.

They helped organize two churches. They also oversaw more than 400 volunteers who helped build two church buildings and a pastor's home, enlarged a sanctuary and a seminary building, and remodeled a house that serves as a meeting place for a new mission point.

"Please thank Baptists in the United States for sending the Cumminses," said Jose Alcantar, pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church, which sponsors a mission work among the Garifuna, black Hondurans from the Caribbean.

Leadership in that mission is one of the Cumminses' primary prayer requests at present.

"Missionaries: From Churches with Love," the

theme for this year's foreign missions emphasis, is more than a slogan for missionaries Ken and Tammy Cummins — it's a constant reality.



Tammy Cummins, a Foreign Mission Board (FMB) Missionary in La Ceiba, Honduras, works in a Sunday school class with children at Renewal Baptist Church. The love from churches "back home" that nurtured Cummins and her husband, Ken, all the way to the mission field is now poured out in the lives of children in Honduras — and in 127 other countries where FMB missionaries serve. The Cumminses are currently on furlough in Princeton, Ky. (FMB photo by Warren Johnson)

### 1995 Lottie Moon Top 10 Mississippi Churches (total gifts)

1. First, Brookhaven .....\$242,943
2. First, Jackson .....204,264
3. First, Columbus.....121,114
4. Broadmoor, Jackson .....98,478
5. First, Natchez .....90,046
6. First, Clinton .....60,814
7. First, Starkville .....51,861
8. First, Laurel .....47,101
9. First, Hattiesburg .....46,000
10. Parkway, Clinton .....45,021

Source: Annual Church Profiles



## Missionary News

Robin Reid is serving her second year as a Southern Baptist missionary journeyman. After being appointed by the Foreign Mission Board, she began serving in Guatemala City, Guatemala, in August 1995. Her assignment is to teach third grade at the Christian Academy of Guatemala, an interdenominational school for American missionary children. She attends Iglesia Bautista Shalom (Shalom Baptist Church) where she helps teach preschool Sunday School. She also helps with U.S. mission teams coming to Guatemala. She will complete the two-year program in June 1997. Robin is a member of Bethlehem Church, Laurel. She is a graduate of Jones Junior College and University of Southern Mississippi. Her parents are Rhett and Alice Reid of Laurel. Her address is Robin Reid, c/o C.A.G. (M-299), PO Box 02-5345, Miami, FL 33102-5345.



Reid

## NAMES IN THE NEWS



Friendship East Church, Charleston, recently held a deacon ordination service for Mike Griggs (center). Pictured with him are his wife Phyllis (right) and J.G. Thomas, pastor.

Lucille Cannon who was 90 on November 3 was guest of honor at a birthday party in Calhoun City at the home of Carter and Margie Dobbs. Mrs. Cannon, member of First Church, Bruce, helped Calhoun County Baptist women make 115 quilts and deliver them to a mission in Montemorelos, Mexico. She reports, "My mission now is Bibles to Mexico. Our Dorcas Prayer Circle sent 105 Bibles. People call and want to share in the work." Her address is RR 2 Box 232, Bruce, MS 38915. "I am still telling the good news, how God reached



Cannon

down his hand for me 85 years ago. Every day with Jesus is sweeter than the day before."

## STAFF CHANGES

David D. Green has resigned from Cedar Grove Church, Columbia, as pastor to accept the position of pastor of Lincoln Avenue Church, Newport, Tenn. He previously pastored Broadmoor Church, Gulfport, and is a graduate of New Orleans Seminary and Luther Rice Seminary.

Ray Bennett has been called as associate pastor of Wheeler Grove Church, (Alcorn Association) effective Nov. 17, 1996.



Bennett

John M. Kendrick, Pearl, has been called as pastor of Providence Church, Pearl, effective Nov. 10, 1996.

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# Staying Well Informed

## A Christmas Message

This Christmas season we're celebrating and we have a gift for you.

As we at Mississippi Baptist Medical Center begin our 86th year, we have cause to celebrate. Never before has our mission been clearer. Never before have we had access to more lifesaving technology. Never before have we been able to offer such a wide range of medical care to the people of our state, nation and world. For all these blessings, we owe and give thanks to God this holiday season.

We also want to say thank you. As a member of our Baptist family in Mississippi, you are a crucial element in our mission to provide Christian-based medical care. It was your Christ-centered vision which resulted in our founding in 1911, and it has been your prayers, leadership and financial support that have guided us in the 85 years since. Our partnership with you continues to grow as we reaffirm our commitment to using Christian-based principles in carrying out our mission.

As a special gift to you and all the people we serve, MBMC will soon air "Heart and Soul," a seven-minute program in which many of our current and former patients, employees and friends talk about their experiences and love for Baptist. The program will be shown Sunday, December 8, at 10:35 p.m. on Jackson stations WLBT, WJTV and WAPT. It's our way of saying that we appreciate the people who have made Baptist successful. You may recognize some of the people who are featured in this program. They represent people from all walks of life who find they are part of the Baptist family. Some are patients with life-threatening illnesses. Others have worked here for many years. Still others are physicians who have come to love the camaraderie they find at Baptist. Whatever their situation, they have one thing in common: they believe in the institution affectionately known as "The Baptist."

We hope you'll be able to tune in to this program. We also ask that you continue your prayers and support of us. With your prayers, and God's will, we commit to serving you for another 85 years!

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



### TOBACCO IS DEADLY

Editor:

I am writing in response to the chastisement you received from Larry Smith in your Nov. 7 edition regarding the effects of smoking. He quoted an article in the American Family Association Journal stating, "...no deaths can be attributed to environmental tobacco smoke..."

He has obviously never watched someone in his family die a slow, agonizing death due to emphysema, lung, breast, or throat cancer — and be grasping for a cigarette from their hospital bed.

Maybe he is right. Perhaps tobacco is totally harmless — and the world is completely flat.  
Melinda Allen  
Grenada

### SUPPORTS FELLOWSHIP

Editor:

How pleased and proud I was to read about the Covenant Ministerial Fellowship and the

signing of their code of ethics (Oct. 31 issue).

When I first began to teach ministerial ethics in 1987, and as I worked with James Carter to write a textbook on that subject, it became obvious that ministerial accountability was a major weakness among Southern Baptist ministers.

On the last page of this textbook, in a chapter urging each minister to write a code of

ethics, we express the hope that someday groups of Baptist will produce such a code.

Writing a code of ethics is extremely difficult. Three major problems to solve are authorship, instruction, and enforcement. The most difficult is the last one, and yet that is the key. How does a group of ministers enforce the code in a way that is fair and firm? Without sanctions, a code of

ethics is nothing more than a piece of paper to hang on the wall and admire.

My congratulations and support to this group for their efforts. My continuing encouragement to them and numerous ministers who are writing a personal code of ethics as a standard for their own ministry.

Joe E. Trull

Professor of Christian Ethics  
New Orleans Seminary

## JUST FOR THE RECORD

**Newton County Association** is currently promoting a ministry opportunity with the Skilled Nursing Facility at the Newton Regional Hospital which provides patients a chance to celebrate and receive birthday wishes through monthly church-sponsored birthday parties. For more information contact Danette Berry, Activities Director, Newton Regional Hospital Skilled Nursing Facility at 601-683-2031 ext. 321.

**Northside Church, Hattiesburg**, will have special services Dec. 8-12; Sunday 11:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Each night service will be at 7:00 p.m. A fellowship dinner will be served after the morning service. Dean Perkins is pastor.

**Macedonia Church, Petal** presents three Christmas musicals: Dec. 8, 7:00 p.m., the combined children's choirs will present "The Don't Be Afraid Brigade"; Dec. 14-15, 7:00 p.m.,

the youth choir will present "Code Red, an E.R. Christmas"; and Dec. 21-22, 7:00 p.m., the Praise Choir will present "The Word." For more information contact the church office at 601-545-3110. Jerry Doggett is pastor.

**Williamsville Church, Kosciusko** will have RA Races on Jan. 25, 1997. All churches must register before Jan. 2, 1997. Entry fee is \$1.00 per person. For more information, call the church at 601-289-4294. This is not the official state RA Race. Allen Simpson is pastor.

**PMA - Breakfast Club (Positive Mental Attitude)** meets each Monday 7:00 - 7:30 a.m. at Shoney's Restaurant on Interstate 55/Northside Drive in Jackson. There is a speaker each week and guests are welcomed. For further information call Tom Anderson at 601-992-6151.

**Crossgates Church, Brandon** will present "A Crossgates Christmas" Saturday, Dec. 14 at 7:00 p.m.; Sunday, Dec. 15 at 4:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. Featured will be

**Leaf River Church, (Smith)** invites the public to a Christmas Dinner on Sunday, Dec. 15 following the morning worship service. Daniel Perry is pastor.

**First Church, Natchez** sanctuary choir will present "Two from Galilee," a dramatic musical based on the book by Marjorie Holmes Dec 15-16 at

**Mantee Church, Mantee**, recently had their GA-Acteen recognition service. GAS receiving badges are (front row, left to right) Anna Johnson, Lindsey Kilpatrick, Leigh Springer, Anna Hinkey, Katie Kilpatrick; (second row, left to right) Sherrie Gail Springer, Amanda Hinkey, Courtney Jackson, Marla Stone; (third row, left to right) Renee Hastings,



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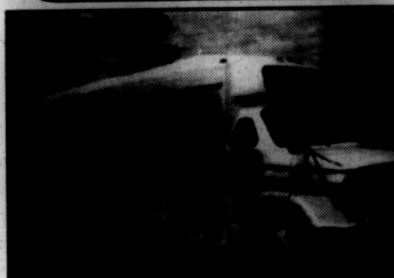
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7:00 p.m. This musical tracks the betrothal of Mary and Joseph to the birth of the Messiah. Complimentary tickets can be obtained by calling the church office at 601-442-1464. Odean Puckett is pastor.

### Mantee Church GA's

Kari Lawrence, and LaWanda Clark. Acteen recognition crownbearers were (front row, left to right) Tanner Roverson, Amber Hidspeh, Caitlin Carty, and Stephen Turner.

Acteens completing levels of StudiAct were (second row, left to right) Shanan Johnson, Danna Stone, Amanda Wilker, Elizabeth Harrington; (third row, left to right) Amber Forrester, Laura Stone, Danielle Wilker, Heather Stephens. Laura Stone received the Mississippi Citation.

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## LIFE AND WORK

### To tell the truth

Ex. 20; I Kings 21; Prov. 6; Eph. 4

What is the harm in lying? Why would God have to command His people to tell the truth? God knew, in our sinful nature, we would yield to Satan and to the sin of lying. Some people start lying as a child by saying, "I didn't do it!", and progress through life by frequently altering the truth. Lying has a destructive nature and is sternly condemned throughout the Bible.

**Do not lie (Ex. 20:16).** This commandment prohibits untruthfulness of any kind. Lying takes on many forms such as lying to ourselves, lying to God, being silent, adding to or taking away from the facts, telling only part of the truth, and even includes body language such as the raised eye-

brow or the shrug of the shoulder. The New Testament, in James 3:5-6, pictures the danger of the misuse of the tongue by emphasizing the tongue as a small part of the body which can create large disasters.

Slander, lies, and gossip are rampant in our society and, sadly, even in the body of believers. All forms of lying cause pain, harm, unfair punishments, and are a destructive force in personal relationships. Therefore, God commanded His people to speak the truth — whether in a courtroom setting or in any segment of life. Tell the truth!

**Lies can destroy (I Kings 21:8-16).** Ahab wanted the vine-



Cynthia Douglas

yard adjoining his property. When he could not buy it, he became depressed. Jezebel, his wife, devised a plan for getting the vineyard. She wrote letters with three instructions and forged King Ahab's name and seal. First, she said to seat Naboth, the vineyard owner, in a seat of honor. Second, two men were to lie and testify to false charges. Third, Naboth was to be sentenced to death by stoning. Her instructions were carried out and now Ahab could have Naboth's vineyard. What a price of lies, deception, and murder for a mere vineyard!

When adults become obsessed with earthly desires, they can become hardened to the effects on the lives of others. Selfish lies can destroy marriages, parent-child relationships, and the fellowship in a body of believers. Colossians 3:9a says: "Do not lie to one

another." Lies are destructive!

**God hates lies (Prov. 6:16-19).** This passage gives seven actions which the Lord hates. Lying is the only evil which is mentioned twice. God hates all sin and He clearly states how strongly He views the sin of lying. Yet in today's world adults often rationalize lying by saying, "It's just a little lie; I'm only repeating what I heard; The truth is too painful; No one will ever know; or I only lied to protect my reputation." Worse yet, parents set a bad example for children by lying in their presence.

Adults cannot please God when they are untruthful in their speech or deceitful in their actions. "Hate" is a strong word which God chose to express how He feels about lying. Proverbs 13:5a says: "A righteous man hates lying." God calls us to be devoted to Him and to act in a manner which reflects this love. Because lying, no matter how small, is an action God

hates, pray for the strength to be truthful.

**Tell the truth (Eph. 4:25).** Paul described the life of good works. He urged the people to put off the old man and to embrace a new lifestyle. This teaching could be compared to taking off the old, tattered clothes and putting on new clothes. Paul outlined six definite ways in which Christians change from the old to the new. Guess which action he named first? "Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor" (Eph. 4:25a). Yes, believers are to turn from lying to telling the truth. To be truthful reflects a Godly life. To be deceitful reflects a life set apart from God and leads only to destruction.

Because God hates lies, He commands us to stop doing it. Because lies destroy lives, then let us commit to being truthful in every aspect of our lives.

*Douglas is a member of First Church, Columbus.*

## FAMILY BIBLE SERIES

### Surrender to God's will

Luke 1:26-42

Speak to some people about "doing the will of God" and they immediately think about doing something totally against their wishes. Somehow they equate surrendering to God's purposes as being forced into a miserable lifestyle. However, accepting the will of God should be more like walking into the most joyous and most fulfilling kind of life ever imaginable. Just think of it, joyously discovering and then doing that for which God intended for you when you were born!

If we could ask Mary about God's will for her life, I think that her testimony of surrender and joy would somehow cause my testimony to pale in comparison. Let's see how her experi-

ence came about.

**The Amazing Announcement (vv. 26-29).** Mary had been appointed for a glorious task. No doubt her shock and amazement was noticeable. God chose the right avenue for revealing his divine will, for Gabriel certainly would have been a convincing presence. I'm not convinced that Mary knew the full scope of Gabriel's message. Neither do we necessarily have to understand all the ramifications of God's purpose for our lives to accept or surrender to his call. Isn't it amazing that God selects people like you and me to carry out his purposes.

**The Disturbing Details (vv. 29-30).** Gabriel clearly sensed



Jim Phillips

fear in the response of Mary (v.29). He knew that she was in need of reassurance if he was going to be able to complete his message to her. I'm sure we all would have required it. "Fear not" seems to be a favored word from the angels of God whenever they come with news from on high. The shepherds too would later receive such a word of assurance (Luke 2:10). She showed forth her true humanity in her confusion of just how it was that God would do through her all that the angel had said.

**The Assuring Answer (vv. 35-37).** God never lacks in adding clarity to his revelations. When a child of God today cries out for understanding, he determines to clarify the points of confusion with an assuring word from his Word. Mary is assured that what God is doing through her will be fully governed by the very Holy

Spirit of God. Perhaps she was comforted by the Old Testament promise of God's Spirit being poured out upon his servants for the purpose of carrying forth his purposes. The fact that the angel added the story about Elizabeth's pregnancy as well must have been a great comfort to her.

**The Surrendered Servant (vv. 38-45).** Mary acted on what she believed to be the Lord's revealed will for her life. She would be the vessel through whom God would bring forth his Son. Her journey to the home of Elizabeth only added to the credibility of the amazing truths. Elizabeth praised Mary's willingness to accept God's will and also reminded her and us that heavenly blessings are poured out on those who will take God at his word (v. 45).

The Son of God is worthy both of our worship and of our wills. At Christmas time it seems easier to feel compelled to follow Christ since so many automati-

cally seem captivated by all the activity. The secret to a Christian's happiness though is in keeping surrendered to the things of God regardless of the season. Like Mary, to accept God's design for our lives is to accept the blessedness and joy of knowing our lives too can be used by God. From the great to the small, God has a plan for his children that he will reveal, direct and bless. We can know it by asking God to reveal it and we can find it by going to his Word.

Why not ask for such a gift from God right now? No greater gift is worth having at this season of the year. To know God's will is to know God's loving grace for all the challenges. To surrender to that will is to walk into a quality of life that Jesus described as "abundant" (John 10:10). Welcome God's abundant gift for your life!

*Phillips is pastor, North Greenwood Church, Greenwood.*

## EXPLORE THE BIBLE

### Growth in faith

Matthew 13:53 14:36

Jesus constantly encountered people who were having difficulty growing spiritually. Some people had their minds made up about him and did not plan to change. Others simply had heard nothing all their lives but the orthodox theology and found it hard to consider new ideas. Still others were less interested in the truth than they were in safeguarding their own power or wealth. Countless people who Jesus met were stuck in a state of spiritual immaturity.

**Unbelief at Home (13:53-58).** One group Jesus had a hard time reaching was those people who had seen him grow up. The people of Nazareth had the problem of familiarity. They knew Jesus' family and found it hard to believe he was the Messiah. Even when he demonstrated his authority they still resisted to

admit the truth.

**Unbelief at the Top (14:1-12).** Jesus also met with opposition and spiritual immaturity among the leaders of Israel. Herod saw in Jesus and John the Baptist a serious threat to his throne. He preferred power and reputation to the truth to the extent that he allowed John to be killed rather than protect him.

**Unbelief among the Twelve (14:13-21).** Jesus depended upon the Twelve to help him and to be prepared for carrying on his work in the future. He knew that the crowds needed food, since they had been following him from town to town. The Twelve were quite practical. They wanted Jesus to conclude his work day and send the people away to find food. After all, Jesus was under no obligation to



Ronald Bishop

feed them. They had followed him voluntarily. However, Jesus commanded the Twelve to feed the crowds. Naturally the disciples wondered where the food would come from, since they only had five loaves of bread and two fish. What followed is well-known. Jesus multiplied the food and fed five thousand men, plus many women and children. They even had food left over, some twelve baskets full.

**Unbelief at Sea (14:22-27).** After the feeding of the five thousand, Jesus sent the twelve into a boat and travel to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus remained behind, planning to cross later after dismissing the crowds. After the crowds were gone, Jesus went up onto a mountain to pray. He then joined the Twelve, walking out on the water to them during the night. The disciples saw him and were afraid, thinking he was a ghost. He quickly calmed their

fears by identifying himself and telling them not to be afraid.

**Unbelief Transformed into Belief (14:28-33).** Though the Twelve were afraid, being out at sea in bad weather with someone approaching them on foot, Peter regained his composure and his faith. He asked Jesus if it really were he approaching. Peter gave Jesus a little test in which he got an invitation to walk on the water with Jesus. Upon Jesus' invitation, Peter too began to walk on the water. Peter proved that even his spiritual growth needed improvement, for he began to sink when he began to doubt. However, his doubt was interspersed with enough faith to know where to look for help.

As Peter began to sink, he cried out to Jesus for help. Of course, help was forthcoming. Not only did Jesus save Peter from drowning, he also helped him back into the boat. As Jesus and Peter got into the boat, the wind that had made traveling in the boat so hard stopped blowing. At once the Twelve recog-

nized that this Jesus whom they had been following had much greater power and authority than they had realized. Their instant response was to fall down and worship Jesus. In a moment their spiritual maturity increased dramatically, for they were convinced of Jesus' great power.

Some people are spiritually immature and never get over it. This was true for many in Jesus' hometown of Nazareth. It also seems to have been true for Herod. Others, such as the Twelve, were able to take in new revelations and incorporate them into their faith. They were able to let their lack of faith be transformed into faith by God's mighty acts. Most people are much like the Twelve in their spiritual lives, sometimes up and sometimes down. God is interested in gradual growth that strengthens the individual's relationship with him. Use unbelief and doubt constructively to grow in your faith.

*Bishop teaches philosophy and religion at Jones County Junior College, Ellisville.*

# THE VILLAGE VIEW

## The Baptist Children's Village



Ronny E. Robinson, Executive  
Director  
P.O. Box 27,  
Clinton, MS 39060-0027  
(601) 922-2242

ACCREDITED



## Gifts of Honor and Memory

A portion of **The Village View** is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

**OCT. 1, 1996-  
OCT. 31, 1996**

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## The Baptist Children's Village Board of Trustees met for its quarterly board meeting recently. New officers were elected.



Billy Pyron of Pyron Furniture Company in Natchez was elected president for 1997 and Ruth Thomas, Consultant with her husband in Clinton, was elected vice-president. Not pictured is secretary, Charlie Miller. Following the meeting, service pins were presented at the annual Christmas luncheon.



Kelly Pyron (right), retired from the Pyron Furniture company in Natchez, was awarded his 35 year service pin for his years of service on The Board of Trustees of The BCV. Also pictured is Billy Pyron.



Tom Winstead, (right) of Clinton who is retired from Veterans Affairs received his 6-years service pin. Pictured with Winstead is Executive Director, Ronny Robinson (left) and Alabel Wiser, Intake Social Worker for The Baptist Children's Village.



Paul Nunnery pictured with wife, Dorothy, received his 40-years service pin. Paul was a Board member for The BCV before serving as Executive Director for nearly 30 years. Nunnery continues his service to this ministry as Legal Counsel. (Nunnery has compiled a history of the BCV ministry. For information about copies call Chrystelle Thames at 601-922-2242.



Ronny Robinson (left), Executive Director, received his 15-years service pin for combined years of service as board member and Executive Director. Pictured with Robinson is Alabel Wiser, BCV staff member.



Jimmy Hollingsworth, (right) Delta Planter of Hollandale received his 20-years service pin. Pictured with Hollingsworth are Robinson and Wiser.



Gary Parker, (left) Trustmark Banker of Brandon received his 10-years service pin. Pictured with Parker is Wiser and Robinson.



Jim Alford, pastor of Parkway Baptist Church, Tupelo received his 1-year service pin. Pictured with Alford is Robinson and Wiser.

# Nursing home residents receive heavenly book

By Sharon White  
The Meridian Star

*Editor's note: Retired pastor Carless Evans and Paula Moore direct Ebenezer Ministries in Bailey. Since the following article was published earlier this year, more than 2,000 copies of their book, "All about Heaven" have been distributed in nursing homes across Mississippi. Reprinted by permission of "The Meridian Star," copyright 1996.*

Because Carless Evans wanted to share the good news of God, he published a book called "All About Heaven."

The book was a complete success, having sold hundreds of copies in local stores and to local residents.

That wasn't enough for the retired pastor, who wants everyone to know what to expect when they reach the pearly gates.

The book, co-authored by Paula Moore, is being distributed free of charge to nursing home residents throughout east Mississippi and west Alabama.

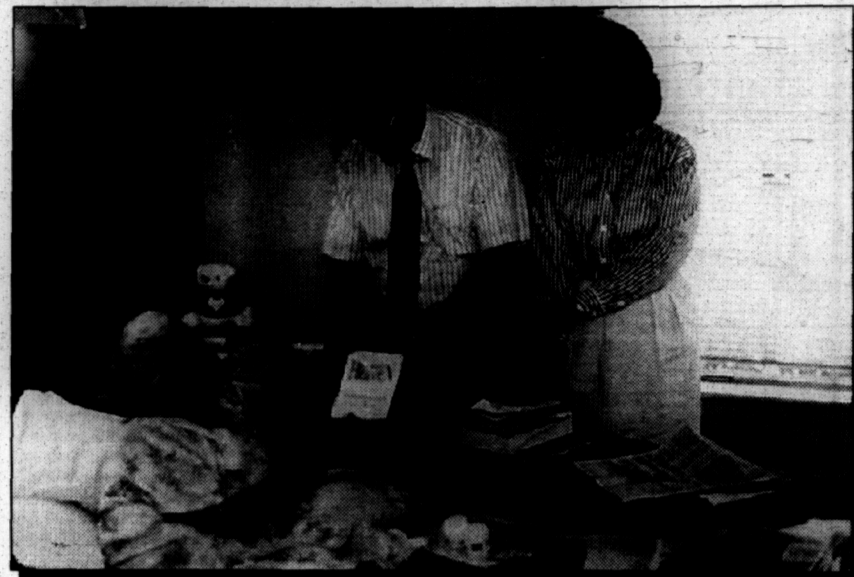
This week, residents of Kemper County Nursing Home in DeKalb take the giveaway that started in May over the 1,000 book mark.

So far, nursing homes in Meridian; York, Ala.; and Newton have received copies. Requests, Evans said, have been coming in from other nursing homes in the area, totaling 1,000 more requests.

"We know of no other ministry like this," said several local pastors who also use the book for a reference source.

"I want to minister to the needs of my people, for most of them will leave here with their next stop being heaven," said a Marion County (nursing home) administrator. "I can feed, clothe, and house my residents, but only God can give the hope of a better life and eternity," added another.

"Heaven, that is where I'm going," said an 87-year-old resident at one of the homes where the book was distributed. "This book gives me hope for a better life, and I thank God," she added.



Carless Evans (standing, left) and Paula Moore (standing, right), directors of Ebenezer Ministries in Bailey, present a copy of "All about Heaven" to Helen Phillips, a resident of Kemper County Nursing Home in DeKalb. Ebenezer Ministries is endeavoring to place the book with as many east Mississippi and west Alabama nursing home residents as possible. (Special photo)

"This book answers questions my mother asked me in the few months before she died," said one man whose mother was a nursing home patient.

On Friday, Evans said he plans to speak to a group of

nursing home administrators representing 11 counties in Ala. on "The Spiritual Needs of a Nursing Home Resident."

For more information, contact Ebenezer Ministries at P.O. Box 45, Bailey, MS 39320-0045. Telephone: (601) 737-2240.



## LifeAnswers

Ron Mumbower, Ph.D.  
Minister of Counseling  
First Church, Jackson

*I can point to almost any page in the Bible and find a story about sex. Why shouldn't I enjoy myself like the Bible people did in their day?*

The people of the Bible struggled with many of the same issues that we face today, including sexuality. When you study Bible lessons on such matters, be sure you understand the consequences that followed the sinful actions of Bible characters. It may appear these folks were having fun, but they eventually paid a high price for disobeying God. The Bible is clear that times of obedience to God bring joy and stability, while times of disobedience end in sadness and grief. God gave us sex for procreation, pleasure, and companionship — a man and woman in a married relationship for life. Sex was never meant for self-gratification; it is an accompaniment to fulfillment, but not fulfillment itself. The powerful urges toward sexual sin generated by our deceptive culture can be combated by maintaining a personal relationship with Almighty God, who is the wellspring of truth and fulfillment. Like many Bible characters, when we take for ourselves such important matters as sexuality, we cheapen God's

best for us and settle for the world's ordinary instead of God's extraordinary.

*Which parent is to blame when a child of divorce goes bad — the custodial mother or the non-custodial father?*

When a child "goes bad," there can be many reasons. The trauma of divorce can be devastating. The feeling of abandonment can be harsh, and the adjustment can be difficult. However, the fact remains that your child has made personal choices as to how he will live his life. That holds true even in the best of family situations. Our sin nature is constantly at work within us. Only prayer and a focused relationship with Jesus Christ can give us the strength we need to withstand temptation. Parents do a disservice to their child when they accept responsibility for bad behavior, rather than allowing the child to suffer (and understand) the consequences of poor choices. Stop blaming yourself or allowing others to blame you for your child's conduct. Pray for forgiveness where you have gone wrong, and for the strength to be a Christian witness to your child. Pray constantly for your child's salvation.

Send your counseling questions to LifeAnswers c/o The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Please be brief. Name is not required. Remember: in time of crisis, your pastor can make recommendations on your counseling needs.

## Bibliocipher

By Charles Marx  
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SIG EQIPJUOUG PQRTT  
HRTT ILJB AQU BRXU JS  
AQU TJGW PQRTT CU  
PROUW.

GJXRBP AUB: AQVGAUUB

Clue: V equals I

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: John One Twelve.

## NAC COMING AGAIN!

Acteens leaders from 24 state conventions and Woman's Missionary Union, SBC, met recently to begin planning for the 1998 National Acteens Convention (NAC). The convention, which drew some 14,000 participants in 1994, will be held July 1-4, 1998, at the Kentucky Fair and Exposition Center in Louisville, Kentucky. The leaders hope the convention will help Acteens know their value to God and others, the importance of their relationship to God, and the significance of living a Christian lifestyle.



Pictured with state convention identification, are (back row, from left): Penny Powers, Dakotas; Connie Dixon, New Mexico; Jeannine Zaiger, Colorado; Karen Mendenhall, California; Sandra Tapp, Maryland/Delaware; Barbara Galloway, Georgia; Pam Smith, Virginia; Jan Turrentine, WMU, SBC; (second row, from left) Julie Keith, Kentucky; Betty Flatt, Kansas/Nebraska; Phyllis Adams, New York; Doris Bane, Wyoming; Angela Lowe, Arkansas; Sharon Lipps, Ohio; Robin Keels, Illinois; June Weaver, West Virginia; Mary Scott, Indiana; Jill Potter, Michigan; Becky Nelson, WMU, SBC; (front row, from left) Sarah Groves, WMU, SBC; Amanda Day, Tennessee; Rebekah Duke, Virginia intern; Joanne Gueck, British Columbia; Dee Hodges, Alaska; Edna Gilliland, Arizona; Sharon Thompson, Florida; Kathy Scott, Missouri; Cindy Gaskins, Texas; (Southern Baptist Convention WMU photo by Theresa Barnett)

For more information, contact the Mississippi Woman's Missionary Union, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, Ms 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 968-3800 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651.